

## SBNF Route Designation Restoration (FINAL)

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APP # 700525

### A. List of Restoration Activities

The San Bernardino National Forest (SBNF) has one of the highest concentrations of federally and state listed Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) species in the nation and hosts over 5 million visitors annually. Unauthorized off highway vehicle (OHV) use has increasingly become an issue. In 2008, the SBNF completed its analysis for travel management planning and completed an environmental assessment for the restoration of up to seventy four miles of unauthorized roads. For the past two years, the Mountaintop District, with the help of the State, has been working on the restoration of twenty miles of unauthorized routes. We have concentrated on areas with high potential for motorized conflicts with federally and state listed endangered and threatened species and habitat. This project has been highly successful and is expected to be completed in December of 2010.

Riding on the success of this project, the SBNF is proposing to address an additional thirty miles of unauthorized routes. We have applied for and obtained federal stimulus funding to 'rip' and 'chunk' many of these routes to de-compact hard surfaces. We have also obtained a large supply of boulders to install as barriers along the entrances to these routes to prevent unlawful entry. We would like ask for additional state funding to transport and place these boulders, seed, plant, mulch, additionally rip and sign 250 sites. In most cases fencing will not be necessary. Monitoring, site watering, specialist and volunteer coordination, and patrolling will also be included. The majority of these sites are located on the Mountaintop District where the highest conflict with cultural sites, TES species and OHV unauthorized use exists.

The primary source of disturbance is unauthorized route creation by off highway vehicles. Due to their proximity to designated routes, OHV use on these illegally created routes is frequent and difficult to control. Forest OHV and resource staff have implemented measures to mitigate these impacts but these measures have not been successful. Many of these unauthorized routes are temporarily signed to prevent trespass, however, unauthorized use and impacts to cultural and natural resources continue. These areas are also frequently patrolled by Forest Protection Officers, OHV staff and volunteers, and resource staff. Without permanent physical restoration, impacts to these sites and surrounding resources are certain to continue. Restoration efforts that include native plant methodologies, such as seeding and planting, have been shown to greatly improve the aesthetic and ecological functions of the habitat.

### B. Describe how the proposed Project relates to OHV Recreation and how OHV Recreation caused the damage:

Unmanaged OHV use on the SBNF has resulted in unplanned roads and trails, erosion, watershed and habitat degradation and impacts to cultural resource sites and to threatened, endangered and sensitive species. While unauthorized motorized vehicle travel off of system roads and motorized trails continues to be the greatest threat to wildlife and botanical resources on the SBNF, restoration of these roads and trails will improve the habitat and help the forest reach its desired goals (as stated in the SBNF LMP, 2006). Unauthorized OHV use is the primary source of these unauthorized routes proposed for restoration. Because their proximity to system routes, continued OHV use on these illegal routes is frequent and difficult to manage. Even with temporary closures and signage in place, continued use is inevitable without permanent physical restoration.

OHV recreation is an extremely popular activity in the SBNF and surrounding urban areas. With increasing populations in these nearby urban areas, we can expect the number of users to increase as well as the potential for impacts. Restoration of these routes is crucial to prevent further habitat fragmentation. Despite the proximity of threatened and endangered species occurrences and critical habitat within the project area, no impacts beyond those which occur under the existing conditions are expected. The decommissioning and restoration of unauthorized routes will help protect the species and their habitat. Using native plants to visually disguise these unauthorized routes is not only aesthetically pleasing to forest visitors, but enhances wildlife habitat by providing food and cover.

The Big Bear Ranger Station hosts a native plant nursery with a commercial sized greenhouse, lathe house, and seed storage facility that provides native plant materials for these restoration projects. In addition to this facility, we have a

shade cloth structure at the Lytle Creek Nursery and have partnered with Children's Forest of the San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA) to assist in our restoration efforts. Our monthly volunteer program (the Big Bear Greenthumbs), which often includes OHV enthusiasts, is a hands on way for forest visitors to learn about restoration and the need to stay on roads and trails.

**C. Describe the size of the specific Project Area(s) in acres and/or miles**

The SBNF Route Designation Restoration project area is spread out onto 250 separate sites identified in the map tiles attachment "SBNF Road Decommissioning Project". Each site is a minimum of 350 feet in length. Including width and additional surrounding acres treated and protected the project will cover approximately 30 miles and 90 acres.

We anticipate a minimum of 5,000 plants to be propagated and planted at forty percent of these (high profile) sites, while other sites will require only mechanical decompaction, seeding and barrier placement.

**D. Monitoring and Methodology**

The attached Habitat Management Plan (HMP) document, as part of this application, describes the forest's protocol for restoration site monitoring. The included table, "Restoration Monitoring Sites for Fiscal Year 2009" lists the forest's current restoration sites, all of which are monitored annually. Habitat and restoration monitoring is conducted by the forest's restoration team, primarily botanists and wildlife biologists, using a standardized Restoration Monitoring Form (included in HMP document). Additional photo monitoring points will be established to document re-vegetation recovery utilizing USDA's established Photo Point Monitoring Handbook Part A- Field Procedures (PNW-GTR-526 March 2002, available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/gtr526/>).

All restoration sites identified in this proposal will be added to the list of sites to be monitored annually per the protocol identified in the HMP document. These sites will remain on active monitoring status until a determination is made that restoration activities in the specified area have been fully successful, and additional site-specific monitoring is no longer needed. In addition to annual monitoring, the new restoration sites will also be monitored, weeded, and maintained primarily by restoration staff and Greenthumb volunteers as often as twice a month during the growing season until vegetation is established. Typically, transplanted vegetation is established in two to three years. Viability counts and estimates are utilized for success criteria. Percent cover is estimated over a period of several years and recorded on the Restoration Forms.

Success criteria can be defined by the following statements.

Restoration activities will be deemed successful if:

- user traffic stays within the defined tread of adjacent designated routes and no off-route impacts are identified within restoration sites, and
- survival rate among plantings is high, and
- natural vegetative recruitment appears to be successful.

**E. List of Reports**

This project does not include the planning for restoration. The planning and subsequent NEPA documents are completed and enclosed as attachments.

**F. Goals, Objectives and Methodology / Peer Reviews**

The objective of this project is to restore up to 30 miles of unauthorized routes (concentrated at 250 sites) by methods of mechanical soil 'chunking', ripping, seeding and planting native plant species, vertical mulching (and slashing), raking and installation of interpretive and/or regulatory signing to prevent future unauthorized vehicle entry. Fencing will be used minimally (as donated boulders will serve as primary barriers). All sites will be monitored, weeded, and watered as necessary to ensure re-growth of native plant species.

Specific Goals/Deliverables

- 250 sites mechanically decompacted by method of 'ripping' and 'chunking'
- 6,000 native plants propagated in the Big Bear Ranger Station Nursery and out-planted in the forest
- several hundred pounds (actual weight of seed varies per species and species available) of seed collected and spread onto decompacted roadbeds
- 50 volunteer (Greenthumbs) days organized and dedicated to this road decommissioning project
- 90 acres of restored, treated, and protected habitat.
- All sites protected with an appropriate barrier (boulders/fencing)
- Regulatory/interpretive signage placed where appropriate
- All sites photographed before and after; and monitored, watered (where appropriate) and mulched.

Peer reviews were conducted and subsequent reports created during the Environmental Assessment for "Motorized Travel Management" on the SBNF. The preferred alternative that was analyzed and chosen (documented in the "Finding of No Significant Impact") included the restoration of 74 miles of unauthorized roads, some of which are included in this proposal.

Forest ID teams met with public scoping groups and produced a document including professional reports from hydrologists, air quality experts, biologists, soils, cultural, and recreation specialists. The project was further reviewed by USFWS whose comments are available in the attached Biological Opinion.

#### **G. Plan for Protection of Restored Area**

The SBNF plans to protect all 250 proposed restoration sites with a combination of barriers and patrol efforts. We have recently been granted an unlimited supply of boulders that we have stockpiled at convenient places throughout the Mountaintop District from a local Caltrans bridge construction project. We have applied for and received funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to place some of these boulders at the head of these unauthorized routes. We plan to use these as a primary source of "protection" for our sites. Boulders, if placed correctly, can provide an aesthetically appropriate alternative to traditional fencing practices. If used in conjunction with native vegetation, boulders can provide a natural form of site protection. Slashing (or mulching), raking in berms, and seeding can also help "erase" the footprint of the roadbed. Disguising the unauthorized roadbed from the general public view is a primary step in the restoration process. Fencing of trails and routes will only be used when natural vegetation and boulders do not work or are not appropriate.

In addition to these physical barriers, a combination of regulatory and interpretive signage will be placed on these sites that state "resource protection" or "sensitive area in recovery". Forest protection officers, OHV volunteers, and resource patrols will have these sites added to their monitoring and patrolling routes. The SBNF launched a new "adopt a monitoring site" program in 2009 that places extra volunteer patrols in areas of resource concerns and high OHV impacts. This gives the forest an extra pair of "eyes" several times a month on our sensitive areas and restoration sites. We plan to add these new restoration sites to this program.

Areas with ongoing impacts will have increased staff and volunteer patrol assigned and law enforcement officials will be notified. In the event that this does not solve the problem, line officers will be notified and a site specific mitigation plan will be developed.

## Additional Documentation

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**1. Project-Specific Maps**

Attachments:

[SBNF Road Decommissioning Project](#)

**2. Project-Specific Photos**

Attachments:

[Two Examples of Routes to be Decomissioned \(There are 250 sites total\)](#)

Project Cost Estimate for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2009/2010  
Agency: USFS - San Bernardino National Forest  
Application: SBNF Route Designation Restoration (FINAL)

3/1/2010

## Project Cost Estimate

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:		Version # _____	APP # _____
<b>APPLICANT NAME :</b>	USFS - San Bernardino National Forest		
<b>PROJECT TITLE :</b>	SBNF Route Designation Restoration (FINAL)	<b>PROJECT NUMBER (Division use only) :</b>	G09-02-14-R01
<b>PROJECT TYPE :</b>	<div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Acquisition</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Development</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Education &amp; Safety</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Ground Operations</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Planning</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restoration</div> </div>		
<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION :</b>	<p>The San Bernardino National Forest (SBNF) has one of the highest concentrations of federally and state listed Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) species in the nation and hosts over 5 million visitors annually. Unauthorized off highway vehicle (OHV) use has increasingly become an issue. In 2008, the SBNF completed its analysis for travel management planning and completed an environmental assessment for the restoration of up to seventy four miles of unauthorized roads. For the past two years, the Mountaintop District, with the help of the State, has been working on the restoration of twenty miles of unauthorized routes. We have concentrated on areas with high potential for motorized conflicts with federally and state listed endangered and threatened species and habitat. This project has been highly successful and is expected to be completed in December of 2010.</p> <p>Riding on the success of this project, the SBNF is proposing to address an additional thirty miles of unauthorized routes. We have applied for and obtained federal stimulus funding to 'rip' and 'chunk' many of these routes to de-compact hard surfaces. We have also obtained a large supply of boulders to install as barriers along the entrances to these routes to prevent unlawful entry. We would like ask for additional state funding to transport and place these boulders, seed, plant, mulch, additionally rip and sign 250 sites. In most cases fencing will not be necessary. Monitoring, site watering, specialist and volunteer coordination, and patrolling will also be included. The majority of these sites are located on the Mountaintop District where the highest conflict with cultural sites, TES species and OHV unauthorized use exists.</p> <p>The primary source of disturbance is unauthorized route creation by off highway vehicles. Due to their proximity to designated routes, OHV use on these illegally created routes is frequent and difficult to control. Forest OHV and resource staff have implemented measures to mitigate these impacts but these measures have not been successful. Many of these unauthorized routes are temporarily signed to prevent trespass, however, unauthorized use and impacts to cultural and natural resources continue. These areas are also frequently patrolled by Forest Protection Officers, OHV staff and volunteers, and resource staff. Without permanent physical restoration, impacts to these sites and surrounding resources are certain to continue. Restoration efforts that include native plant methodologies, such as seeding and planting, have been shown to greatly improve the aesthetic and ecological functions of the habitat.</p>		

	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
<b>DIRECT EXPENSES</b>							
<b>Program Expenses</b>							
1	Staff						
	Botanist	60.000	408.000	DAY	24,480.00	0.00	24,480.00
	Botanist	70.000	274.000	DAY	19,180.00	0.00	19,180.00

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	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
	Other-Forestry Tech/Greenhouse	180.000	128.000	DAY	23,040.00	0.00	23,040.00
	Other-Restoration Biologist	150.000	356.000	DAY	53,400.00	0.00	53,400.00
	Other-Wildlife biologist	60.000	178.000	DAY	10,680.00	0.00	10,680.00
	Archeologist	36.000	390.000	DAY	14,040.00	0.00	14,040.00
	Archeologist	36.000	273.000	DAY	9,828.00	0.00	9,828.00
	Archeologist	90.000	238.000	DAY	21,420.00	0.00	21,420.00
	OHV Coordinator	20.000	293.000	DAY	5,860.00	0.00	5,860.00
	Other-OHV Technician	80.000	194.000	DAY	15,520.00	0.00	15,520.00
	Other-Resource Patrol	180.000	218.000	DAY	39,240.00	0.00	39,240.00
	Other-Greenthumbs volunteers	3000.000	20.570	HRS	0.00	61,710.00	61,710.00
	<b>Total for Staff</b>				236,688.00	61,710.00	298,398.00
<b>2</b>	<b>Contracts</b>						
	Heavy Equipment Operator	250.000	1596.360	EA	0.00	399,090.00	399,090.00
	Other-Contract for Environmental Monitor	250.000	300.260	EA	0.00	75,065.00	75,065.00
	Other-Contract for Temp Road Inspector	250.000	78.000	EA	0.00	19,500.00	19,500.00
	Other-Contract Modification Reserve	250.000	756.000	EA	0.00	189,000.00	189,000.00
	Other-Contracting Officer	250.000	109.380	EA	0.00	27,345.00	27,345.00
	<b>Total for Contracts</b>				0.00	710,000.00	710,000.00
<b>3</b>	<b>Materials / Supplies</b>						
	Other-boulders (barriers)	3000.000	160.000	EA	0.00	480,000.00	480,000.00
	Trash Bags	10.000	20.000	PKG	200.00	0.00	200.00
	Signs	80.000	16.000	EA	1,280.00	0.00	1,280.00

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	Line Item	Qty	Rate	UOM	Grant Request	Match	Total
	Other-Greenhoues supplies; soil, pots, t	1.000	4000.000	MISC	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00
	Rakes and Showels	15.000	30.000	EA	450.00	0.00	450.00
	Other-GPS Unit/Camera Notes : We have recently added numerous volunteers to our restoration site monitoring team. This saves us time and money by having volunteers assist us with our site monitoring. Although we have several tech savvy volunteers, we have found that these gps/camera combination devices are extremely user friendly, easy to train people on and handle (for both the volunteers and employees too) to give us consistant results. We anticipate more patrolling and monitoring needed to cover a span of 250 locations.	2.000	600.000	EA	1,200.00	0.00	1,200.00
	<b>Total for Materials / Supplies</b>				7,130.00	480,000.00	487,130.00
<b>4</b>	<b>Equipment Use Expenses</b>						
	4x4 Vehicle	20.000	316.000	MOS	0.00	6,320.00	6,320.00
<b>5</b>	<b>Equipment Purchases</b>						
<b>6</b>	<b>Others</b>						
<b>7</b>	<b>Indirect Costs</b>						
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>					243,818.00	1,258,030.00	1,501,848.00
<b>TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES</b>					243,818.00	1,258,030.00	1,501,848.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>					<b>243,818.00</b>	<b>1,258,030.00</b>	<b>1,501,848.00</b>

Project Cost Summary for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2009/2010  
Agency: USFS - San Bernardino National Forest  
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3/1/2010

	Line Item	Grant Request	Match	Total	Narrative
<b>DIRECT EXPENSES</b>					
<b>Program Expenses</b>					
1	Staff	236,688.00	61,710.00	298,398.00	
2	Contracts	0.00	710,000.00	710,000.00	The total value of road decommissioning, being used as a match, is part of an existing contract (ARRA-American Reinvestment and Recovery Act) currently underway with the Forest Service with Federal Funds. The total amount of the contract is \$710,000, but it is broken down into the following categories 1. Contract for Road Decommissioning/Heavy Equipment Operator valued at \$399,090, 2. Contract for Environmental Monitoring valued at \$75,065, 3. Contract for Temporary Road Inspector valued at \$19,500, 4. Reserve for Contract Modifications valued at \$189,000, and 5. \$27,345 for a contracting officer and heritage monitor during decommissioning. All are given lump sums directed at restoring 250 sites, so for the "Qty" category you have, we have broken down the lump sums into "per site".
3	Materials / Supplies	7,130.00	480,000.00	487,130.00	
4	Equipment Use Expenses	0.00	6,320.00	6,320.00	
5	Equipment Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	
6	Others	0.00	0.00	0.00	
7	Indirect Costs	0.00	0.00	0.00	
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>		243,818.00	1,258,030.00	1,501,848.00	
<b>TOTAL DIRECT EXPENSES</b>		243,818.00	1,258,030.00	1,501,848.00	



Project Cost Summary for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2009/2010  
Agency: USFS - San Bernardino National Forest  
Application: SBNF Route Designation Restoration (FINAL)

3/1/2010

<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>243,818.00</b>	<b>1,258,030.00</b>	<b>1,501,848.00</b>	
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## Environmental Review Data Sheet (ERDS)

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### ITEM 1 and ITEM 2

#### ITEM 1

- a. ITEM 1 - Has a CEQA Notice of Determination (NOD) been filed for the Project? ☐ Yes ☒ No  
(Please select Yes or No)

#### ITEM 2

- b. Does the proposed Project include a request for funding for CEQA and/or NEPA document preparation prior to implementing the remaining Project Deliverables (i.e., is it a two-phased Project pursuant to Section 4970.06.1(b)) (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No

### ITEM 3 - Project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378

- c. ITEM 3 - Are the proposed activities a "Project" under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378? ☒ Yes ☐ No  
(Please select Yes or No)
- d. The Application is requesting funds solely for personnel and support to enforce OHV laws and ensure public safety. These activities would not cause any physical impacts on the environment and are thus not a "Project" under CEQA. (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No
- e. Other. Explain why proposed activities would not cause any physical impacts on the environment and are thus not a "Project" under CEQA. DO NOT complete ITEMS 4 – 10

### ITEM 4 - Impact of this Project on Wetlands

All National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated environmental regulations and requirements have been followed and met with the proposed SBNF route restoration project. An environmental assessment (EA) "Motorized Travel Management EA" and subsequent "Finding of No Significant Impact" and "Biological Opinion" resulting from consultation with US Fish and Wildlife Service is attached as documentation that outlines the concerns and mitigation measures to be taken for air quality, biological resources (including TES species), cultural resources, and soil and water quality. Copies of these reports can be viewed at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sanbernardino/projects/ohv.shtml>. (See Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences pp. 29-160 of attached EA). Conclusion summaries are as follows:

#### Air Quality:

"No adverse change in attainment status is expected to occur as a result of this project." P.37

#### Biological Resources:

(Botanical) "All project-related effects to Threatened and Endangered plant species will be wholly beneficial and have been addressed under previous consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act."

(Animals) "Threatened and endangered wildlife species are known to occur in or near the areas planned for various actions in the route designation project. Designated and proposed critical habitats are also present. No proposed or candidate wildlife species are known or expected to occur in or near the project area. Despite the proximity of threatened or endangered wildlife species and critical habitat, impacts beyond those which occur under the existing conditions are expected to be wholly beneficial." p.40-41.

All ground disturbing activities within known TES habitat will have monitors present and adhere to limiting operating period (LOP) guidelines to avoid impacts.

#### Cultural Resources:

"One hundred thirty-eight historic properties are located in or adjacent to the area of potential effect and 131 of these will be protected under this alternative through the restoration of unauthorized routes. The remaining seven properties will have no significant effect because they are only adjacent to the APE." p. 97

#### Soil and Water:

Region 5 Supplement 2500-93-1 to Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2530 gives guidance on water quality management and the application of Best Management Practices (BMP). Section 2532.03 states "it is the policy of Region 5 that water quality management on National Forest System lands in California shall be conducted within the guidelines and procedures set forth in R-5 FSH 2509.22 Soil and Water Conservation Handbook and in accordance with the Management Agency Agreement executed in 1981 between the Forest Service and State Water Resources Control Board." p. 125

"Of particular relevance for travel management, BMP #4-7 requires each forest to 1) identify areas or routes where non-highway legal vehicle use could cause degradation of water quality; 2) identify appropriate mitigation and controls; and 3) restrict non-highway legal vehicle use to designated routes. This BMP further requires a forest to take immediate corrective actions if considerable adverse effects are occurring or likely to occur." P. 126

Direction relevant to the proposed action as it affects soil resources can be found on pages 127-129.

"The major effects of cross-country motorized travel and route proliferation on water resources included increased peak flows and sediment loads due to compacted and unvegetated route surfaces and detachment of sediment by vehicles. Soil effects were the physical displacement of soil during construction of a National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) facility or caused by the initial unauthorized motorized vehicle traffic, loss of soil productivity from the displacement and loss of soil depth, loss in soil hydrologic function due to loss of soil and loss of soil cover. For existing NFTS and unauthorized routes, direct and indirect effects have already occurred. The short-term effects of proposed changes to the San Bernardino NFTS system will be small and unquantifiable reductions in traffic-related sediment and related pollutants."

The SBNF is required to follow BMP's for soil and water quality with our Standard Operating Practices or Procedures (SOPs), and Limited Operating Periods (LOPs) for sensitive species to avoid adverse effects. In addition, this project will assist the Forest towards reaching several of the SBNF Land Management Plan (LMP) desired conditions, including;

- 1) The desired condition is that habitats for federally listed species are conserved, and listed species are recovered or are moving toward recovery. Habitats for sensitive species and other species of concern are managed to prevent downward trends in populations or habitat capability, and to prevent federal listing. Wildlife habitat functions are maintained or improved, including landscape linkages.
- 2) Vegetation Restoration 1 Strategy; Restore vegetation through reforestation and revegetation or other appropriate methods after stand replacing fires, drought or other events or activities that degrade or cause a loss of plant communities. Where needed, implement reforestation using native species grown from local seed sources. Consider small nursery operations to facilitate reforestation and revegetation and to improve restoration success where direct seeding is ineffective.
- 3) Invasive Species Prevention and Control Strategy and Weed Management Strategy for southern CA national forests. Use native plant materials as needed to restore disturbed sites to prevent the introduction or reintroduction of invasive nonnative species.
- 4) OHV Management. OHV use is occurring on designated roads and trails only.

#### **ITEM 5 - Cumulative Impacts of this Project**

Appendix B of the attached Travel Management EA lists present and reasonably foreseeable future actions potentially contributing to cumulative effects. (See full discussion on page 30).

Please also refer to the document "DECISION MEMO FOR HABITAT PROTECTION" for discussion on cumulative impacts from the proposed project.

#### Environmental Consequences

Physical and Biological Effects—"This decision will be almost entirely beneficial for the natural resources. The small work areas may experience some short-term impacts but the overall effects will be beneficial. By adhering to all design criteria that have been incorporated into the proposed action, project impacts will be kept to a minimum or eliminated altogether."

Increased traffic and noise from restoration activity would be sporadic and produced in short durations which is not unlike current traffic/noise situations on system routes.

#### **ITEM 6 - Soil Impacts**

This project (as stated on page 152 of the Travel Management EA: Soils report) "has the potential to provide a diverse motorized recreation experience on over 89 miles of designated routes while at the same time providing monitoring, mitigations and visitor controls to protect soil and water resources.. The routes identified in alternative 1 are located on moderate and severe erosion hazard landscapes. User controls, monitoring and maintenance would be crucial for minimizing the effects of motorized traffic on water and soil resources. Alternative 1 also provides for decommissioning of existing routes, restoration of unauthorized routes and the reclassifying of routes to administrative or special use permit use only. Over time (greater than 20 years), these actions would reduce erosion as vegetation becomes established and soil stabilization occurs."

Although short term soil disturbance is expected (but not expected to cause significant effects), long term effects would be beneficial to reduce erosion.

#### **ITEM 7 - Damage to Scenic Resources**

There are no scenic highways within viewshed of this project and therefore no potential damage to scenic resources is expected. Project includes the restoration of unsightly hillclimbs and unauthorized routes to their natural state which will provide a beneficial effect on local viewsheds.

#### **ITEM 8 - Hazardous Materials**

Is the proposed Project Area located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code (hazardous materials)? (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, describe the location of the hazard relative to the Project site, the level of hazard and the measures to be taken to minimize or avoid the hazards.

#### **ITEM 9 - Potential for Adverse Impacts to Historical or Cultural Resources**

Would the proposed Project have potential for any substantial adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources? (Please select Yes or No) ☐ Yes ☒ No

Discuss the potential for the proposed Project to have any substantial adverse impacts to historical or cultural resources.

This project includes the extensive use of heritage monitors to prevent any impacts to historical and cultural resources. Any potential sites will be avoided.

#### **ITEM 10 - Indirect Significant Impacts**

This project is a part of the Travel Management Plan for the SBNF which has the goal of providing completed loop trails and the closure of unnecessary routes and trails. It may be expected that the closure of these unnecessary road spurs may increase useage on existing main routes and trails but lessen overall impacts on wildlife, TES, and sensitive cultural sites by decreasing habitat fragmentation. This project is not expected to cause indirect significant impacts from increased use, but to lessen impacts from existing use.

#### **CEQA/NEPA Attachment**

Attachments:

[Travel Management Environmental Assessment](#)  
[Travel Management Decision Notice/Decision Memo](#)  
[USFWS Biological Opinion Section7 \(ESA\)](#)  
[Habitat Restoration Memo \(Mountaintop District\)](#)

## Evaluation Criteria

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### 1. Project Cost Estimate - Q 1. (Auto populates from Cost Estimate)

1. As calculated on the Project Cost Estimate, the percentage of the Project costs covered by the Applicant is: 10

(Note: This field will auto-populate once the Cost Estimate and Evaluation Criteria are Validated.) (Please select one from list)

- ☒ 76% or more (10 points)  
☐ 51% - 75% (5 points)  
☐ 26% - 50% (3 points)  
☐ 25% (Match minimum) (No points)

### 2. Natural and Cultural Resources - Q 2.

2. Natural and Cultural Resources - Failure to fund the Project will result in adverse impacts to: 24

(Check all that apply) (Please select applicable values)

- ☒ Domestic water supply (4 points)  
☐ Archeological and historical resources identified in the California Register of Historical Resources or the Federal Register of Historic Places (3 points )  
☒ Stream or other watercourse (3 points)  
☒ Soils - Site actively eroding (2 points)  
☒ Sensitive areas (e.g., wilderness, riparian, wetlands, ACEC) (2 point each, up to a maximum of 6) Enter number of sensitive habitats [3]  
☒ Threatened and Endangered (T&E) listed species (2 point each, up to a maximum of 6) Enter number of T&E species [12]  
☒ Other special-status species- Number of special-status species (1 point each, up to a maximum of 3) Enter number of special-status species [20]

Describe the type and severity of impacts that might occur relative to the checked item(s):

If this project is not implemented, routes will still be decompacted and many of them still closed off with barriers; however, most sites will still be visible to the public view and therefore continued use is likely to occur. Continued use has lead to continued propagation of new routes which ultimately leads to soil loss, direct kill of vegetation (including TES species\*), increased sedimentary loads into surrounding waterways (including streams and domestic water supply in the Big Bear Valley and greater Santa Ana Watershed), direct loss of topsoil, and increased habitat fragmentation. In addition, there are over a hundred sensitive cultural sites within the project area that can be irreversibly damaged if continued use occurs and restoration measures are not completed. Several of these sites are eligible, but not yet identified in the California/Federal Register. \*TES species include 12 listed plant species found in sensitive habitats such as wilderness, riparian, wetland, and carbonate in the project.

### 3. Reason for Project - Q 3.

3. Reason for the Project 4

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☐ Protect special-status species or cultural site (4 points)  
☒ Restore natural resource system damaged by OHV activity (4 points)  
☐ OHV activity in a closed area (3 points)  
☐ Alternative measures attempted, but failed (2 points)  
☐ Management decision (1 point)

- ☐ Scientific and cultural studies (1 point)
- ☐ Planning efforts associated with Restoration (1 point)

Reference Document

The SBNF assessed all motorized traffic routes on the forest in 2006. We completed a "Motorized Travel Management Environmental Assessment" in 2008 which identified over 74 miles of unauthorized routes and trails to be restored, many bisecting sensitive cultural and biological resources.

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sanbernardino/documents/travelmanagement\\_sbnf\\_final\\_ea.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/sanbernardino/documents/travelmanagement_sbnf_final_ea.pdf)

**4. Measures to Ensure Success - Q 4.**

4. Measures to ensure success –The Project makes use of the following elements to ensure successful implementation 12

(Check all that apply) Scoring: 2 points each (Please select applicable values)

- ☒ Site monitoring to prevent additional damage
- ☒ Construction of barriers and other traffic control devices
- ☒ Use of native plants and materials
- ☒ Incorporation of universally recognized 'Best Management Practices'
- ☒ Educational signage
- ☒ Identification of alternate OHV routes to ensure that OHV activities will not reoccur in restored area

Explain each item checked above:

Patrol and site monitoring will be conducted by staff and volunteers as described in monitoring section of this application. Boulders, fencing (where necessary), and native vegetation will be used as barriers to prevent continued unlawful entry. The restoration staff of the SBNF collects, propagates and out-plants genetically appropriate and local species for all restoration projects on the Forest. Best Management Practices are always required and employed for ground disturbing activities on the Forest. Both regulatory and education signage will be placed on restored sites. New maps have been developed following the travel management assessment and will be distributed by patrol and monitors and available at district offices and on the SBNF website.

**5. Publicly Reviewed Plan - Q 5.**

5. Is there a publicly reviewed and adopted plan (e.g., wilderness designation, land management plans, route designation decisions) that supports the need for the Restoration Project? 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☐ No (No points)
- ☒ Yes (5 points)

Identify plan

The SBNF Land Management Plan (2006) desired condition for OHV Management is that "OHV use is occurring on designated roads and trails only." Another desired condition for vegetation restoration states "Restore vegetation through reforestation and revegetation or other appropriate methods after stand replacing fires, drought, or other events or activities that degrade or cause a loss of plant communities. Where needed, implement reforestation using native species grown from local seed sources." The 2008 Travel Management Assessment also supports a need to restore the 74 miles of unauthorized routes on the SBNF to prevent continued soil, habitat and cultural resources loss.

**6. Primary Funding Source - Q 6.**

6. Primary funding source for future operational costs associated with the Project will be: 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☒ Applicant's operational budget (5 points)
- ☐ Volunteer support and/or donations (3 points)

- ☐ Other Grant funding (2 points)
- ☐ OHV Trust Funds (No points)

If 'Operational budget' is checked, list reference document(s):

Many of the restoration projects are sustained by grant funding from outside sources, however, federal appropriated dollars is the main source of staff salary for future patrol, monitoring, and maintenance of forest projects. Federal fiscal budgets are produced annually and can be viewed at the San Bernardino National Forest Supervisors Office in San Bernardino, CA.

**7. Public Input - Q 7.**

7. The Project was developed with public input employing the following 2

(Check all that apply) Scoring: 1 point each, up to a maximum of 2 points (Please select applicable values)

- ☒ Publicly noticed meeting(s) with the general public to discuss Project (1 point)
- ☒ Conference call(s) with interested parties (1 point)
- ☒ Meeting(s) with stakeholders (1 point)

Explain each statement that was checked

Internal ID team meetings and public meetings and phone conferences were held during the Travel Management Analysis that lead to the Environmental Assessment and subsequent Decision Memo for this project. This project has been publicly posted on public record, the SBNF website, and local media outlets. Surrounding agencies and private parties were also notified.

**8. Utilization of Partnerships - Q 8.**

8. The Project will utilize partnerships to successfully accomplish the Project. The number of partner organizations that will participate in the Project are 4

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

- ☒ 4 or more (4 points)
- ☐ 2 to 3 (2 points)
- ☐ 1 (1 point)
- ☐ None (No points)

List partner organization(s):

The San Bernardino National Forest Association (SBNFA) is our primary volunteer partner and plans to assist with this project. Americorp, San Bernardino County crews, and the Urban Youth Corp are being coordinated through SBNFA and will play a large role in project implementation. The Big Bear Greenthumbs is a monthly volunteer group created and dedicated to conducting ecological restoration on the Mountaintop District. Each year they contribute over \$40,000 of in kind services. The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act supplied much needed funds to launch this road decommissioning project. Student interns from California State University San Bernardino are also planning to assist in the implementation of this project with oversight from SBNF staff.

**9. Scientific and Cultural Studies - Q 9.**

9. Scientific and cultural studies will

(Check all that apply) (Please select applicable values)

- ☐ Determine appropriate Restoration techniques (2 points)
- ☐ Examine potential effects of OHV Recreation on natural or cultural resources (2 points)
- ☐ Examine methods to ensure success of Restoration efforts (1 point)
- ☐ Lead to direct management action (1 point)

Explain each item checked above



**10. Underlying Problem - Q 10.**

10. The underlying problem that resulted in the need for the Restoration Project has been effectively addressed and resolved 3

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

☐ No (No points)

☒ Yes (3 points)

Explain 'Yes' answer

A comprehensive Travel Management Environmental Analysis and Assessment was created to provide sensible and safe travel routes through the SBNF. With the proposed closure of 74 miles of unauthorized routes, several miles have also been adopted and new routes created and added to the existing NFS roads and trails system to provide user friendly routes throughout the forest. We are hoping that with these minor additions to existing routes and permanent closures to the unnecessary routes, unauthorized use will be minimized.

**11. Size of sensitive habitats - Q 11.**

11. Size of sensitive habitats (e.g., wilderness, riparian, wetlands, ACEC) within the Project Area which will be restored 5

(Check the one most appropriate) (Please select one from list)

☒ Greater than 10 acres (5 points)

☐ 1 – 10 acres (3 points)

☐ Less than 1 acre (1 points)

☐ No sensitive habitat within Project Area (No points)